

N E W S R E L E A S E

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'State of California Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet' Draws Hundreds of Veterans and Employers *Honors Vet Sacrifices with Easy Access to a Variety of New Career Options*

OAKLAND – Hundreds of skilled and motivated veterans, and employers eager to hire them, came together with an unprecedented collaboration of service providers, apprenticeship sponsors and state agencies at the "State of California Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet" job and resource fair at the Oakland Marriott City Center in Oakland today. The fair is the seventh in a series of ten such events statewide designed as part of Governor Schwarzenegger's initiative to open employment and education avenues for veterans.

"The Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet' fair creates a rare opportunity for veterans to meet with employers who are ready to hire, and public and private agencies eager to help with education, training, apprenticeships and other services," said Victoria Bradshaw, Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

"If an employer is looking for someone who is task oriented, skilled, well trained and capable of following orders, then veterans are the best candidates they can find and these job fairs are a great opportunity to connect with qualified candidates," said California Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson.

California is home to 2.2 million veterans, more than any other state. But often, they may encounter difficulties in securing employment or returning to civilian life. Further, recently returning veterans between the ages of 18 and 24 have an unemployment rate as high as 10%.

"This veterans' resource fair gives employers an opportunity to hire some of the best job candidates – women and men who have not only developed high-level job skills but, equally important, the discipline, loyalty, leadership and work ethic that make them such highly valued employees," said Employment Development Department Director Patrick Henning.

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The job and resource fair is designed to assist veterans transitioning into civilian life by providing a variety of career, training, education, and support services...all in one location. At the same time, employers can find many of the skilled and motivated employees they need to help build their businesses.

The series of "Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet" events is supported by a unique collaboration among state agencies that provide services to these veterans: the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency's Employment Development Department (EDD) and the Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR) Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the California Community Colleges (CCC), and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA).

The EDD staff at One-Stop Centers throughout the state offer veterans priority services and job placement assistance through programs including the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for service members leaving military service, Providing Opportunities for Veterans (PROVET) which places veterans in medical and health related jobs, and REALifelines which provides job placement to returning disabled veterans. The EDD staff also helps new veterans file for Unemployment Insurance benefits, develop resumes, find job openings and job training opportunities.

DIR's Division of Apprenticeship Standards administers apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs. These programs not only include traditional labor and construction trades, but also manufacturing, health care, car repair, culinary arts, public safety and other professions. With an apprenticeship, participating veterans can earn a living, learn a lifelong career skill, and collect on their GI Bill benefit.

CDVA is the primary conduit for veterans and their families. Among other things, it provides veterans assistance in presenting their claims for veterans' benefits, as well as medical services and low-cost loans to acquire farms and homes.

Community Colleges offer veterans priority status and payment of training costs and assistance in living expenses. While the GI Bill can actually help cover costs of further education and career development, a dependent of a veteran may also be eligible for a Veteran's Fee Waiver to pay college tuition and fees.

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